2229

THE

UNIVERSAL SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT NORTHAMPTON,

BEFORE THE

HAMPSHIRE MISSIONARY SOCIETY;

AT

THEIR ANNUAL MEETING,

AUGUST 25, 1808.

BY THE REV. TIMOTHY M. COOLEY, A. M.

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NORTHAMPTON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BUTLER.

1808.

AT a Meeting of the HAMPSHIRE MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

Auguſt 25, 1808 :

VOTED,

That the Rev. Meſſrs. S. WILLIAMS and E. HALE, be a Committee to give the Thanks of the Society to the Rev. Mr. COOLEY, for his Sermon, delivered before them, and requeſt of him a Copy for the Preſs.

ATTEST.

P. WILLISTON,

RECORDING SECRETARY.

A

SERMON, &c.

REVELATION, XIV. vi.

AND I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL FLY IN THE MIDST OF HEAVEN, HAVING THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL TO PREACH UNTO THEM THAT DWELL ON THE EARTH, AND TO EVERY NATION, AND KINDRED, AND TONGUE, AND PEOPLE.

THE apoſtle John was baniſhed by Nero, a Roman Emperor, to a deſolate iſland, called Patmos, "for the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt." While he was here in a ſtate of ſolitude, deprived of opportunities of preaching to the churches, or converſing with chriſtian friends, he was favored with a remarkable intimacy with God, and with a prophetic view of the future ſituation of the church. Inſtead of being thrown by, as of no further uſe, he was improved as an inſtrument of unſpeakable good to the church, by receiving and committing to writing the Revelation, which conſtitutes the laſt book in the ſacred canon. The perſecutor, by depriving the church in that age, of the preſence of this beloved apoſtle, placed him in a ſituation, to write for the comfort of the church in future ages.

The Apocalypſe exhibits a prophetic view of the church, from the time of its author to the end of the world. It is written, like many other prophecies, in a ſtile highly figurative and emblematical. It is not the deſign of ſcripture propheſy, to make men prophets, by enabling them with exactneſs to predict future events. Such knowledge would be no advantage to the ſaints, and might prove very dangerous in the poſſeſſion of ſinners. It was therefore wiſe in God, to deliver to us the prophetic ſcriptures in the language of ſymbols, which are attended with ſome degree of obſcurity, till they are explained by correſponding events.

The obſcurity of propheſy is not inconſiſtent with the moſt perfect preciſion, as appears evident from propheſies which have already received their accompliſhment. A critical attention to the hiſtory of the church, has caſt light on the revelation of St. John, which has been pronounced by many "a ſealed book."

The thirteenth chapter of this book deſcribes the riſe, power, and cruelties of the beaſt. The fourteenth chapter opens to view a more pleaſing ſcene. John ſaw the lamb ſtanding on Mount Zion, accompanied by his choſen diſciples. He heard the ſongs of the redeemed. He ſaw an angel fly in the midſt of Heaven, having the everlaſting goſpel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

For many centuries the goſpel has been confined to a very ſmall part of the inhabited earth. Nine parts out of ten, of that race for which the Savior died, are in the region and ſhadow of death. It will not be always thus. The day is haſtening on, when the everlaſting goſpel ſhall be preached to every kindred, and tongue, and people.

I requeſt the prayers of this aſſembly, while I attempt to ſhew,

I. What we are to underſtand by the goſpel.

II. Why it is called everlaſting.

III. In what *manner*, and at what *time*, the goſpel will be ſpread among all nations.

1. What are we to underſtand by the goſpel?

The word *goſpel* ſignifies *good news*, and is uſed by inſpired writers, to expreſs the whole ſcheme of ſalvation, by the obedience and death of the Son of God. It is called the "goſpel of God," becauſe it came from the Father, who was the principal contriver of it, as the firſt perſon in the ſacred Trinity. It is called the "goſpel of Chriſt," becauſe Jeſus Chriſt, by his obedience and ſufferings, prepared the way for the ſalvation of ſinners. It is called the "goſpel of the grace of God," becauſe it is a diſplay of aſtoniſhing grace and mercy to men.

The exiſtence of the goſpel ſcheme of ſalvation, implies the fallen, ruined condition of mankind, and their inability to reſcue themſelves from interminable miſery. In order to

discharge any from the dreadful penalty of the law, there must be a satisfactory atonement. And without shedding of blood "is no remission." The veracity of God, the honor of his violated law, and the support of his moral government, required the sufferings of the mediator, for the pardon of sin. No finite being could make an atonement. Neither men, nor angels, could satisfy divine justice. The Savior of sinners is expressly said to be the "true God, and equal with the Father." The divinity of Christ is so interwoven with the whole scheme of revealed religion, that if we deny this fundamental truth, we strip this holy religion of every thing which can afford the least comfort to an awakened, convinced sinner.

Since God has sent his Son to save sinners, he has made it certain, that some will be saved. A wise being would not be at such infinite expence to redeem the world, and then leave it as a matter of mere contingence, what number, or whether any would be saved. An elect number were given to Christ, and their salvation secured by the covenant of redemption. "All that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me."*

Personal holiness is essentially necessary to give us an interest in the promises of the gospel. No divine decree, no atonement, though in itself infinitely valuable, will secure salvation to any, without holiness of heart and life. Faith and repentance, are the terms of salvation, without which Christ has died in vain.

Such is the opposition of the human heart to the gospel, that, without the special influences of the spirit, all with one consent will reject the offered mercy. "No man can come "unto me," saith Christ, "except the Father draw him." "Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life."

From the depravity of man, we infer the necessity of regeneration, and that this change is wrought by the special influences of the holy spirit. "Except a man be born of "water, and of the spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of "God." Believers are said to be "born not of blood, nor "of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but "of God."

* John, 6. 37.

The final perſeverence of the ſaints, is a doctrine intimately connected with regeneration by ſpecial grace. "We "are confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun "a good work will perform it until the day of the Lord "Jeſus." If it were poſſible for one to fall from grace, it would be poſſible for ten, or a thouſand, or even all the ſaints; and Chriſt might fail of his church.

Having now very briefly exhibited the goſpel ſcheme of ſalvation, I ſhall proceed to ſhew,

II. Why the goſpel is called everlaſting.

1. Becauſe the plan was laid from eternity.

The ſalvation of men was determined in the councils of Heaven, before time began. When God determined to create man, he foreſaw the apoſtacy, with all its conſequences. When he created man, and forbade him to eat of the tree of knowledge, he knew that he would diſobey, and involve himſelf and his poſterity in deſerved ruin. When man rebelled, an omniſcient God was not diſappointed. The goſpel plan, though not revealed, had been already formed in the divine mind. There is no new thing with God. "Known unto him are all his works, from the "beginning of the world." When our ſchemes are fruſtrated, and we are diſappointed of ſome pleaſing object of purſuit, we are compelled, from neceſſity, to adopt a different ſcheme. Through the imperfection of our wiſdom and foreſight, our plans are imperfect; but the divine plan was perfect. When the goſpel was publiſhed to man in the garden of Eden, it was new to man and angels; but it was no new thing with Jehovah. May we not ſafely believe, that the Son of God, through eternal ages, contemplated the redemption of the church, with divine delight? "Then "I was by him, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth; "and my delights were with the ſons of men."*

2. The goſpel is everlaſting, becauſe all who become intereſted in it, were choſen of God from eternity.

God determined not only to ſend his Son to make atonement for ſin, and lay a foundation for the conſiſtent exerciſe of forgiving mercy; but he alſo determined how great a number ſhould be ſaved, and who ſhould conſtitute the

* Proverbs, 8. 30, 31.

individuals. In the covenant of redemption, the Father gave a chosen number to his Son, to be redeemed, sanctified, and saved. These are called "God's elect."* To these the Savior had an evident reference, in the prayer he addressed to the Father, on that gloomy night in which he was betrayed. "I pray for them: I pray not for the "world; but for them which thou hast given me out of "the world."†

It must be acknowledged by all, that the sinner is regenerated by divine power. If it be proper for God to effect the work of regeneration in the sinner's heart, it is proper for him previously to determine to do it. And if God may form such a determination a moment before hand, he may with equal propriety a month or a year. And if it be suitable that God should have such a determination in time, it is equally suitable that he should have had it from eternity. Every objection against the eternal purpose of God, respecting the salvation of sinners, lies with equal weight against his present purpose.

Were it possible for a new thought or a new purpose to arise in the mind of Deity, it would imply that he was liable to change, and therefore an imperfect being. "But he is "of one mind, and changeth not." Whatever God now does, he always designed to do. The regeneration of sinners is evidently the subject of God's eternal purpose. "He hath chosen us in him," saith the apostle, "before the "foundation of the world, that we should be holy and "without blame before him in love: having predestinated "us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ himself, "according to the good pleasure of his will."‡

3. The gospel is everlasting, because it will constitute a subject of investigation and delight, to saints and angels, forever.

The gospel, with all it glorious consequences, has forever existed in the divine mind. We have no evidence that it was revealed to angels, previous to its being communicated to our fallen parents, in the garden of Eden. On the first intimation of a promised Savior, the holy angels caught the

* Rom. 8. 33. † John, 17. 9. ‡ Eph. 1. 4, 5.

joyful intelligence, and with ſacred delight, began to inveſtigate this new ſcheme of ſalvation. The incarnation, life, ſufferings, and death, of the Son of God, together with every thing which relates to the redemption of the church, have been the ſubjects of their contemplations. Theſe are "things which the angels deſire to look into." They will never fully comprehend this "myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſt in the fleſh." It will afford them an eternal theme of delightful inveſtigation.

One object of redeeming love, was to diſplay the character of Jehovah to them. "To the intent that now unto "principalities and powers, might be known by the church, "the manifold wiſdom of God." In redeeming the church, the infinite benevolence of God appears in a new and glorious point of view. Angels can here ſee a manifeſtation of ſuperlative wiſdom and infinite mercy. They had never ſeen divine mercy called into exerciſe, till they beheld it, in the goſpel plan of ſalvation. As the cherubims made by Moſes, turned their faces towards the mercy-ſeat, ſo will the cherubims above, with intenſe delight, dwell forever on the merciful diſpenſation of the goſpel.

The glorified ſaints will unite with angels, in ſearching into the myſteries of redeeming love. The redeemed hereafter, will learn many intereſting particulars of our Savior's life, which are not recorded in the goſpels. Many parts of the goſpel ſcheme are imperfectly underſtood in the preſent life. The Son of God called his followers *diſciples*, or *learners*. This ſignificant name implies, that they are introduced into a ſchool where Chriſt is the teacher, and the goſpel is the ſcience which his diſciples are to ſtudy. And will not the diſciples of Chriſt continue to be learners, under their great teacher, after they arrive in glory? Will not the goſpel afford ample ſcope, for their devout inveſtigations, through eternal ages? As they increaſe in knowledge, will they not with deeper humility, admire the compaſſions of God to a ruined world; and be able more and more "to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and "depth, and height; and to know the love of Chriſt, which "paſſeth knowledge, that they may be filled with the "fulneſs of God."

4. The gospel is everlasting in the effects experienced by saints and sinners.

When St. Paul preached the gospel at Rome, "some believed, and some believed not." Such is the reception it commonly meets with. To some it becomes a savor of life unto life, and to others a savor of death unto death. Those, who believe, and those who reject the gospel, will feel the effects of their conduct to all eternity.

The saints will hereafter become perfectly conformed to holiness, and enter upon a state of complete and eternal joy. "They shall return and come to Zion with songs and "everlasting joy upon their heads; and they shall obtain "joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." "Everlasting joy shall be unto them." All the pleasant things of the present life will have an end. "All is vanity." But the joys which the gospel proposes are endless. "The "righteous shall go away into life eternal."

The effects of the gospel upon despising unbelievers, will be eternal. It is expressly declared by Christ, that the wicked at the day of judgment "shall go away into ever-"lasting punishment." St. Paul has left this solemn warning on record, "that those, who know not God, and "obey *not the gospel* of the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be pun-"ished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the "Lord, and from the glory of his power."

The gospel which you hear, my brethren, is everlasting. It has already existed an eternity which is past: and it will forever exist, the admiration of angels and saints, and the stumbling stone and rock of offence to devils and impenitent sinners. Our eternal happiness or misery depend on the reception we give to it. "He, then, that is wise, is wise for himself, but he that scorneth, he alone must bear it."

Let us now proceed to enquire,

III. In what *manner* and at what *time* the gospel will be preached among all nations.

The *manner* in which the gospel will be spread is evidently intimated in the words of the text. *I saw an angel fly in the midst of Heaven. Angel* is a name, not uncommonly applied to ministers of the gospel. The ministers of the seven churches in Asia, are called *angels*. Inspiration has

conferred this honorable name, upon the miniſters of religion, to expreſs the nature and high importance of their commiſſion.

By the angel mentioned in the text we are to underſtand, either ſome eminent reformer in the church who is appointed for extenſive uſefulneſs, or the chriſtian miniſtry collectively. The goſpel miniſtry was inſtituted to continue to the end of the world; and with very particular reference to the laſt times. In the paſt ages of the church, the goſpel has been ſpread by an evangelical miniſtry. This was the caſe in the apoſtolic age. A ſingle apoſtle carried the goſpel to thouſands and perhaps to millions. Both under the Jewiſh and chriſtian diſpenſations, the miniſters of religion, have been the inſtruments of diffuſing divine knowledge.

If the angel mentioned in the text, repreſent the goſpel miniſtry, the "flying of the angel" repreſents the diligence, and zeal with which they are to fulfil their work. And is there not an evident alluſion to miſſionary labors? The flight of an angel in the midſt of heaven, may very fitly repreſent the rapidity of miſſionary journies for heavenly and divine purpoſes. There is a plain intimation in the text, I think, that the goſpel will be ſpread among all nations, by miſſionaries ſent forth to preach to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. The miſſionary cauſe is now in its infancy. Something has been already done—yea much has been done. Thouſands, we believe, have been brought into the kingdom of Chriſt, by the means of miſſionary labors.—But the field is ſtill extenſive. The harveſt is great, and the laborers are few. With great propriety may we urge the exhortation of our Lord, "Pray ye, therefore, the "Lord of the harveſt, that he would ſend forth laborers in-"to his harveſt." Every attempt to qualify young men of talents and piety for the work of the ſacred miniſtry, muſt be viewed with peculiar pleaſure by the friends of religion.*

It is pretty evident from prophecy, that the diſperſed Jews will be called home to the land of their fathers, before

*We cannot but congratulate the churches upon the eſtabliſhment of a Theological School in this ſtate, which bids fair to be an inſtitution of very great importance to the cauſe of religion.

the commencement of the Millennium. They can very eaſily leave their preſent homes, and commence a pilgrimage to Jeruſalem. They are generally a mercantile people, and can readily collect their effects, and prepare for ſuch a journey. After they ſhall have aſſembled at the land of Paleſtine, impreſſed with concern for the nations among whom they have dwelt, they will be led to deviſe means to chriſtianize the world. This nation, collected from their diſperſion, will underſtand the languages, cuſtoms, and character of moſt of the nations of the earth. Their local ſituation will be favorable. And they will be qualified, above any other nation, to form and carry into effect the moſt extenſive ſchemes, for diffuſing the chriſtian religion. Here we may look for a nation of miſſionaries. "The law will go "forth from Jeruſalem." "For if the caſting away of "them be the reconciling of the world, what ſhall the re- "ceiving of them be, but life from the dead?"*

At what future time the goſpel will be preached among all nations is an enquiry of importance. Many have fixed the time and been diſappointed in their expectations. Many are prejudiced againſt any attempts to inveſtigate the ſubject. Divines of the preſent day are agreed, that this deſirable period is not far diſtant, and, as it draws near, we ſhall gain increaſing light in determining the preciſe time of its commencement.

The time when the goſpel will be preached among all nations is revealed in prophecy. "Secret things belong to "God, but things revealed belong to us and our children "forever." The future glory of the church is deſcribed in many paſſages of ancient prophecy, and two of the prophets, Daniel and St. John, have fixed the time when it will take place, with great preciſion. In the prophecies of Daniel and St. John, a certain period is mentioned during which the enemies of religion ſhould oppreſs the church. This period is variouſly expreſſed, and is ſaid to continue *for time, times and an half*, or three years and an half—for *forty and two months*—for *a thouſand two hundred and threeſcore days*.—If we compute a year according to the cuſtom of the an-

*Romans 11. 15.

cients, to consist of three hundred and sixty days, we shall find that three years and a half equal forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days. A day in the language of prophecy is put for a year. Twelve hundred sixty days imply twelve hundred sixty years. At the close of this period the enemies of the church will be destroyed, and the Jews will return to their own country.

The only difficulty attending this subject lies in determining the time when this period of twelve hundred sixty years began.

Two very powerful enemies have arisen, and oppressed the saints, both of which are distinctly described in prophecy.

In the year 606 Mahomet made his appearance, and began to propagate his religion in the East. Of him it was predicted, that he should *wax great, and cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and that he should cast down the truth, and should practise and prosper, and destroy the mighty and the holy people, and through his policy should cause craft to prosper in his hand.** The Mahometan impostor was notorious for trampling upon the truth, for destroying the ministers of Christ, and prospering in his persecution of the people of God, and prevailing by the craftiness of his counsels.

The authorities of the papal church have been another very violent enemy of the saints, and have worn them out with persecutions. The power of the Roman prelate gradually increased till the year 606, the same year which gave rise to the Mahometan impostor, when Boniface was declared universal Bishop and supreme head of the Catholic church.

It is remarkable that Mahomet in the East, and the Pope of Rome in the West, two very bitter enemies of the saints who have been "drunken with their blood," arose into public notice the same year. No other period will afford so remarkable a concurrence of circumstances as the one under consideration.

The period of the church's tribulation began in 606,

* Daniel 8.

we can then correctly determine, that it will end in the year 1866. Whether this calculation, which is advanced by a respectable European writer,* be correct or not, it is evident that the church has been a long time in sackcloth, and her days of mourning are nearly at an end. The triumph of the enemies of religion must soon cease. There is nothing in the present state of things to discourage the expectation, that within sixty years mahometanism and popery will be exterminated. On the contrary many things are evidently conspiring to bring about this event.

If the calculation I have now exhibited be according to truth, we may determine the time when the gospel will be preached to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. The days of the church's distress will end in the year 1866. The Jews will then be called in and inherit the land of Palestine. Such a remarkable event will awaken the attention of the world, excite a spirit of enquiry, and "many "shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increas-"ed." But the blessedness of the church will not take place till seventy five years after this period. Dan. 12. 12. "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand "three hundred and five and thirty days." Then will the gospel have reached all nations, attended with the most happy effects. "The kingdom and the greatness of the king-"dom, under the whole Heavens," instead of being in the hands of the enemies of the cross of Christ, "will be given "to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose king-"dom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve him." The church of Christ which now is, and ever has been, a little flock, will then extend into all the earth.—— "God the Father will give to his Son the heathen for his in-"heritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his pos-"session."

I shall close with several remarks which the subject and present interesting occasion suggest.

1. How thankful ought all to be who enjoy the gospel! However extensive it will be hereafter, at present, it is confined to a favored few. How many of our brethren

*Faber.

are ſtrangers to the way of ſalvation through Chriſt! How many fallen ſpirits never had the offer of a Saviour! How many within our own country, have but a very imperfect knowledge of the way of life, and ſeldom enjoy an opportunity to hear a goſpel ſermon! When we turn our eyes to others, and conſider their condition, well may we enquire, "who hath made us to differ?" The everlaſting goſpel is our birth right. We were taught it in childhood, and have not, like many others, been deprived of it in our riper years. Let it be the ſolicitous enquiry of us all, "What ſhall we "render to the Lord for all his benefits?" Every heart which can feel, muſt feel the higheſt emotions of gratitude for the unſpeakable gift of a Saviour, and for the offers of life eternal, through his atoning blood. May we bear it in mind, that to whom much is given, of them much will be required: and that the ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes

2. Happy are all thoſe, who are intereſted in the promiſes of the everlaſting goſpel.

All the ſaints have a perſonal intereſt in the great things which God is carrying on for his choſen people. Their ſins are pardoned, and their names are written in the book of life. They have a good hope through grace, which is as an anchor to the ſoul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt, entering into that which is within the veil. They have found, by happy experience, that the ways of wiſdom are pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. They enjoy a preſent reſt, and are favored with ſome foretaſtes of that reſt, which remaineth for the people of God.

The ſaints are engaged in a cauſe which has been near the heart of God from eternity, and which will prove ſucceſsful. Preſent appearances may be dark and diſcouraging. Infidelity and vice may yet prevail to a very alarming degree. The ſaints of the Moſt High may be reviled and ridiculed, or fall a ſacrifice to the violence of perſecution. But let all the humble followers of the lamb, lift up their heads, for their redemption draweth nigh. The happy period is approaching, when the Lord ſhall appear in his glory, to build up Zion. The ancient ſaints, who lived before the

incarnation of the Son of God, "all died in faith, not "having received the promiſes; but having ſeen them afar "off, and were perſuaded of them, and embraced them, and "confeſſed that they were pilgrims and ſtrangers on the "earth." Thoſe, who now conſtitute the militant church, will all be gathered to their fathers, before the Millennium ſhall commence; but, being perſuaded of the promiſes, they can enjoy that day in proſpect. And they will enjoy it, when it arrives. From their ſeats in the new Jeruſalem, they will then look down with delight on the great things which God is doing for Zion. "There is joy in Heaven "over one ſinner that repenteth;" much greater will be the joy, "when a nation ſhall be born in a day." In alluſion to the real friends of Chriſt, we may adopt the words of the queen of Sheba to Solomon, "Happy are thy men, happy "are theſe thy ſervants, which ſtand continually before "thee, and hear thy wiſdom."

3. The guilt and folly of thoſe who oppoſe the goſpel, is inexcuſably great.

The wicked in their oppoſition to the goſpel, are oppoſing all the benevolent purpoſes of God, reſpecting the redemption of fallen man. They are exerting their influence to ſtain the glory of God, as it appears in the face of the Mediator, and to deſtroy the happineſs of the univerſe. They are fighting the friendly arm, which is extended to pluck them as brands from the burning. And in ſhort, they are uniting heart and hand with Satan, the foe of God and man, and lending their influence to build up the kingdom of darkneſs. Literature and ſhining talents, have in ſome inſtances, been enliſted on their ſide. But thoſe who are in any form, whether by open infidelity, or ſecret wickedneſs, oppoſing the goſpel will be deſtroyed. "The ungodly ſhall not ſtand "in the judgment, nor ſinners in the congregation of the "upright."

The exertions of the wicked to deſtroy the kingdom of Chriſt, will be ineffectual. They can as eaſily pluck the ſun from the firmament, as prevent the ſalvation of one of thoſe little ones, which believe on the Lord Jeſus. Their cauſe is deſperate. There can be no hope of ſucceſs. Omnipotence is pledged for the ſupport of religion. "I the Lord do keep

" my vineyard, leſt any hurt it. I keep it night and day.—
" Who will ſet the briars and thorns againſt me in battle?
" I would go through them; I would burn them to-
" gether."*

We, my brethren, have a perſonal concern in the goſpel. We have an intereſt at ſtake. We have each of us an immortal ſpirit, which can be ranſomed in no other way, than through the blood of an incarnate God. Let us, then, enquire with anxiety, what reception we have given to the Lord Jeſus? Have we made him our friend, by a voluntary ſubmiſſion to his government? Has the goſpel a commanding influence on our feelings and daily practice? Does it lead us to a life of prayer, humility, and ſelf-denial? Does it diſengage our affections from the flattering objects of time, and fix them on ſpiritual things? Theſe are enquiries, on which it becomes us, as candidates for eternity, to be ſatisfied. Multitudes will go from our world, to people the regions of darkneſs, before the Millennium commences. Let us ſee to it, that we are ſafe. " Serve the Lord with
" fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiſs the Son, leſt he be
" angry, and ye periſh from the way, when his anger is
" kindled but a little."

4. We have reaſon to expect, that there will ſoon come a period of very great diſtreſs, upon the nations of the earth.

Such a period is to precede the Millennium. The calamities which will then overtake the inhabitants of the earth, are by inſpired writers, deſcribed in very affecting language. He that is faithful and true, will " tread the
" wine preſs of the fierceneſs and wrath of Almighty God."
" There ſhall be a time of trouble, ſuch as never was ſince
" there was a nation." The preſent are emphatically evil days. The earth is exceedingly corrupt. Wickedneſs of all kinds abounds; but much greater evils are haſtening on the world. Infidelity will prevail, and become bold. There ſhall come in the laſt days, ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts. The wicked will ſet their mouths againſt the Heavens, and curſe their God and king, and look upwards. Reſtraints will be in a great meaſure removed, and men will

* Iſaiah, 27. 3, 4. † Daniel 12.

act like incarnate devils. The enemies of Zion have been for ages ripening for the harveſt of the wrath of God. When the inhabitants of the ante-deluvian world became univerſally corrupted, and the earth filled with violence, God deſtroyed them all. When the people of Sodom and Gomorrah had corrupted themſelves with every abomination, till the cry of their ſin reached Heaven, the Lord deſtroyed them with a ſhower of fire and brimſtone; and a dead lake covers the ground where theſe famous cities once ſtood. After the Jewiſh nation had caſt contempt on the ordinances of God, and deſpiſed the warnings of their prophets, for many ages, and at laſt rejected and crucified the Son of God, and imprecated his blood on themſelves and their children, they ſuffered an unexampled deſtruction. In like manner will the enemies of the goſpel, who have for centuries oppreſſed the ſaints, very ſoon be made to drink of that cup of trembling, which they have mingled for others. If the calculations which have been exhibited in the preceding diſcourſe, be correct, the enemies of Chriſt will be deſtroyed immediately after the expiration of the year 1866. "The beaſt, and "the kings of the earth and their armies, ſhall be gathered "together to battle; and the beaſt and the falſe prophet "ſhall both be caſt alive into the lake of fire, burning with "brimſtone." The battle of the great day will probably be fought in Paleſtine, and will terminate in the deſtruction of the enemies of religion.

5. It is the duty of all, to uſe the neceſſary means to promote the ſpread of the goſpel.

The church is to be preſerved during the dark period which intervenes between this time, and the commencement of the Millennium. It is not improbable, that the church will gradually increaſe in this period. As the boldneſs of ſcoffers and infidels increaſes, there will unqueſtionably be an increaſed engagedneſs among chriſtians. Men's characters will be more decided.

Means will be neceſſary for the preſervation of the true religion. God will awaken and ſanctify ſinners, and build up the church, in the ſame manner as he has done heretofore. We have no reaſon to expect miracles. The cauſe of religion is to be maintained, by a divine bleſſing on the means of

grace. It is then our duty to make uſe of the appointed means. The ſacred ſcriptures have been a means of awakening thoughtleſs ſinners, and increaſing the faith and joy of the ſaints. It is then infinitely important, that the Bible ſhould be circulated among the poor and the ignorant. There are families in our enlightened country, that are deſtitute of the Bible, and children are growing up, without knowing that there is ſuch a book. There is an obligation on us to ſend the ſacred ſcriptures, and other ſerions books, to the needy within our borders. The diſtribution of ſuch books has been attended with happy effects. The preaching of the goſpel has been a means of ſaving many from eternal death. Many in our land are deſtitute of the goſpel. They ſeldom have an opportunity to hear a ſermon. "They are "ſuffering a famine, not of bread, but of hearing the word." Many of our brethren, who are on their way to a ſolemn eternity, are in this unhappy condition. Their day of probation is ſhort, and their eternal deſtinies will ſoon be fixed. We are poſſeſſed of the means of ſending them the goſpel of grace: And what is our duty?

There is a peculiar kind of happineſs in relieving the diſtreſſes of men. And where we can relieve the diſtreſſes of the mind; where we can lend an aſſiſting hand, to promote the eternal ſalvation of any of our brethren, ſhall we be backward to duty? Will not the pleaſure ariſing from charities beſtowed to promote ſuch an object, be a very ample reward? By ſending the goſpel to the deſtitute, we may be inſtrumental in ſaving ſome from eternal ſorrow. And what an occaſion of joy, to a heart acquainted with benevolent feelings, to be the inſtrument of reſcuing an immortal ſoul from interminable woe, and preparing it for a throne in Heaven!

Our exertions to ſpread the goſpel will have a tendency to bring on the latter day glory of the church. We, who are now on the ſtage, have a very important part to act in the concerns of the kingdom of Chriſt. David prepared the materials for the Temple, but his eyes were cloſed in the ſlumbers of death, before that magnificent ſtructure was completed. So we ſhall all ſleep in the grave, before the day ſpring of Millennian glory enlighten our benighted world. But we can be the humble inſtruments of advancing the

honor of our Lord and Savior, and promoting th
glory of Zion. And, " What is noble, let us do it.

Make not the objection, that God can accompliſh h
poſes without our aid. God can accompliſh all his d
of mercy, and he will do it. But, if we reſtrain prayer,
neglect the appointed means, we ſhall have no part nor lo
this matter. If we decline to lend our aſſiſtance, othe
will do the work, and we ſhall fail of a bleſſing. As Mor-
decai ſaid to Eſther, " If thou altogether holdeſt thy peace,
" then ſhall their enlargement and deliverance ariſe from
" another place, but thou and thy father's houſe ſhall
" periſh."